

Unitarian Universalism: What's It All About, Really?
Rev. Dave Hunter
Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg
January 27, 2013

As most of you probably know, Kerry and I spent five years as the co-ministers of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fayetteville, Arkansas. Generally, we took turns preaching. I was surprised one Sunday morning to wake up and find Kerry about to leave.

Dave You're early. Do you have a meeting before church?

Kerry No. Don't you remember? I'm guest preaching in Tahlequah today. That's an hour and a half from here.

Dave But it's your turn to preach *here*.

Kerry No. It's *your* turn. See you about three. Bye!

What to do? After considering calling in sick or just skipping town and going hiking at Devil's Den State Park, I realized it was time to get out the old pack of 3x5 cards. When the time in the service came for the sermon, I asked them to break into small groups, groups of about four. And then I asked them to discuss what for them was special about Unitarian Universalism? or how would they get to the essence of Unitarian Universalism? or what is Unitarian Universalism all about, really? I asked them to try to reach consensus in their group and then to record their answer on one of the 3x5 cards I passed out. Their answer, I instructed them, should be no longer than one sentence, or one tweet.

The result was thirteen cards. And this morning I will share with you what they wrote on their cards, together with a little commentary.

We'll start with this one.

1. Each generation, each congregation, each individual must determine what Unitarian Universalism is.

I find that statement nonresponsive, but attractive – and troubling.

Here's what I like. The group that submitted the statement acknowledges that individuals are responsible for deciding their own answers to religious and ethical questions. Of course, that means figuring it out in a responsible way. And I think it's reasonable to generalize from the individual to the congregation and even to the generation. So each of us individually has a duty to look at religious and ethical questions, and we recognize that our answers could evolve over time. Indeed, our *questions* are likely to evolve as well.